



How Do We Bring Them In?

A Case Study in Using Non-Traditional Approaches to Recruiting Focus Group Participants

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Presentation Overview

- **Project Background**
- **Recruitment Methodology**
- **Recruitment Results**
- **Cost, Time and Effectiveness Comparison**
- **Conclusions**

Project Background

Focus Group Overview

- **Topic: Disaster preparedness**
- **25 focus groups, 128 participants**
- **Date: July 2014**
- **Mode: Most in-person, some by phone**
- **Screening process:**
 - Primarily online screener, but phone screener available as well

Focus Group Overview

- **Location: 13-county Houston-Galveston region**
- **Target populations:**
 - Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing
 - Individuals who are blind or have low vision
 - Individuals with ambulatory difficulties
 - Individuals with transportation difficulties
 - Seniors (ages 65 and older, living independently)
 - Caregivers for seniors (family caregivers or paid caregivers)
 - Caregivers for individuals with cognitive impairments (family caregivers or paid caregivers)
 - Monolingual Spanish speakers

Recruitment Methodology

Facebook Ads

- **Separate ad for each population of interest:**
 - Caregivers for seniors / cognitively impaired
 - Deaf / hard of hearing
 - Blind / low vision
 - Seniors
 - Ambulatory / transportation difficulty
- **English and Spanish**
- **Targeted by:**
 - Location
 - Age
 - Ethnicity
 - Language
 - Interests
- **Clicking on ad led directly to the screener webpage**



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Homme

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Craigslist Ads

- **Houston and Galveston Craigslist sites**
- **Each ad was posted only once throughout the recruitment period**
- **English and Spanish**
- **Provided link to the screener webpage and toll free number for phone screener**

Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations

- **Provided recruitment flyers**
- **Primarily used to recruit:**
 - Seniors
 - Individuals with blindness or low vision
 - Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing
 - Caregivers
- **Also organizations not targeted to specific audiences (e.g., library, multi-service center)**
- **Separate flyer for each region, with logos for counties in the region:**
 - Central, Coast, Far West, Near West, North
- **English and Spanish**
- **Provided link to the screener webpage and toll free number for phone screener**

Get paid to share your opinion!

If you can answer “yes” to any of the questions below, please contact us to see if you are eligible to participate in discussion groups on disaster preparedness.



- Do you rely on a wheelchair or require a walker or cane?
- Are you legally blind, even with correction?
- Do you care for a severely cognitively impaired person?
- Do you spend over 20 hours a week caring for a person over the age of 65?
- Would you have difficulty obtaining access to private transportation in case of an evacuation?
- Are you over the age of 65 and living independently?
- Do you rely on either lip-reading or sign language when communicating with others in-person when not using an assisted listening device?

➤ Discussion groups will last 1½ to 2 hours.

➤ **You will be provided with refreshments and \$40 for participating.**

Interested? Complete our screener at TexasPreparedness.com

or call toll-free: 1-855-844-3638

Texas Preparedness is a joint effort of Ready Houston and county emergency management agencies.

Mayor's Office of Public Safety & Homeland Security, P. O. Box 1502, Houston, Texas 77251

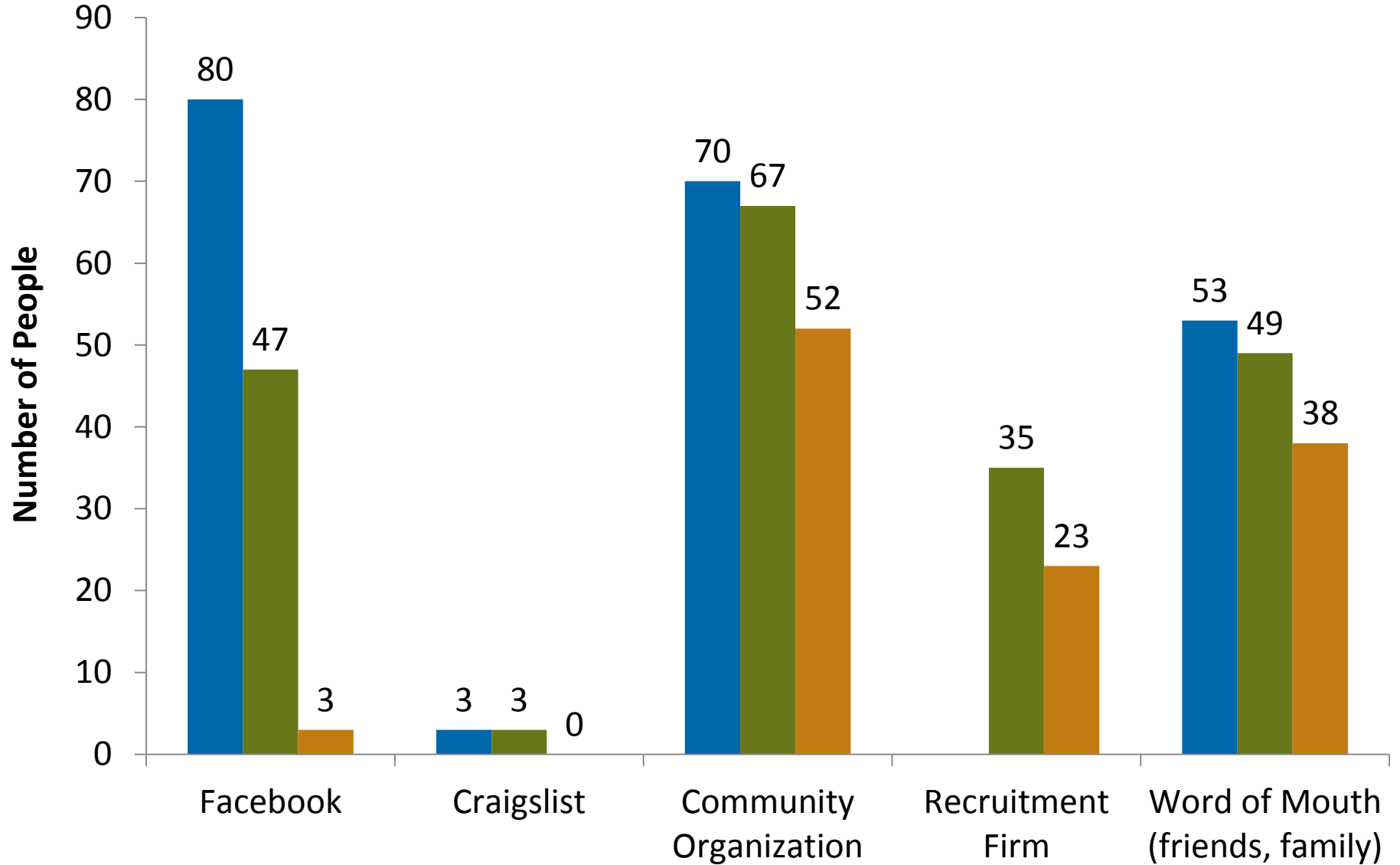


Recruitment Firm

- **Used for the most difficult to recruit populations**
- **English:**
 - Ambulatory/transportation difficulty
 - Caregiver for cognitively impaired
 - Caregiver for senior
- **Spanish:**
 - Ambulatory/transportation difficulty
 - Caregiver for cognitively impaired
 - Caregiver for senior
 - Senior
- **Recruitment firm administered screener**

Recruitment Results

Started Screener Completed Screener Attended Focus Group











Methodology Notes

- **Data on the method of recruitment was obtained via an open-ended question toward the end of the screener that asked respondents how they heard about the focus groups. Not all respondents completed this question.**
- **There are various reasons why a person may have completed the screener but not participated in a focus group, including but not limited to:**
 - No longer interested
 - No focus group occurring near him/her
 - Unavailable on the date/time of focus groups for which he/she qualified
 - No transportation available to attend in-person focus groups
 - Provided inaccurate information in the screener and was unable to be contacted to register for a focus group
 - Registered for a focus group but did not attend

Cost, Time and Effectiveness Comparison

Weighing the Costs vs Benefits...

	Facebook Ads	Craigslist Ads	Community Organizations	Recruitment Firm	Word of Mouth
Money	\$	(FREE)	(FREE)	\$ \$	(FREE)
Time	  		 	 	(NO TIME)
Participants	3	0	52	23	38

Conclusions

Conclusions

- **There are viable alternatives to paying for a recruitment firm.**
 - The recruitment firm did not yield the highest conversion rate from completing the screener to participating in a focus group
- **Recruitment methods with less personalization and outreach, like Facebook and Craigslist ads, yielded lower numbers of focus group participants.**
 - Recruitment through community-based organizations and word of mouth each yielded a participation rate (from completing the screener to participating in a focus group) of 78%, compared to a rate of 6% from the Facebook ads and 0% from the Craigslist ads
- **Not all free recruitment methods are effective.**
 - The Craigslist ads took little time to develop and did not incur a monetary cost, but they yielded only three completed screeners and no actual focus group participants

Conclusions

- **Partnering with community-based organizations can be an effective, low cost recruitment strategy, if you (or your client) can easily gain their cooperation.**
 - For this project, the client had existing relationships with several community organizations that we were able to leverage
 - However, not all organizations were willing to recruit, so this was not an effective strategy for all of our target populations
 - Of those who found out about the focus groups through a community organization and completed the screener, 78% participated in a focus group. This was also the highest number of participants of any recruitment method (58 participants)
- **Sometimes the most effective methods are things completely out of our control.**
 - The second highest number of participants (38) and highest conversion rate from completing the screener to participating in a focus group came from word of mouth, or participants learning about the focus groups from friends and family members



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